

THRICE HAPPY DAY!
(THE NEW YEAR, THE FIRST SABBATH, AND THE TIME OF BLESSING)
NO. 3073

A SERMON
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"From this day will I bless you."
Haggai 2:19

I THINK as soon as ever I read that promise, your heart would leap towards it, and you would spontaneously say, "Lord, be this the day—the first day of the year, and that day the Lord's day—make this the day from which You will begin to bless me in a very special manner!" God's blessing is the richest gift which His creatures can receive, to be deprived of it is their greatest calamity. What is hell? It is the place where God's blessing cannot come. What is heaven? It is the place where God's blessing is constantly enjoyed without admixture.

My God, were there a choice between Your blessing and heaven, I would sooner choose Your blessing, and be out of heaven, than be in heaven, if such a thing were possible, unblessed of my God. The highest felicity of a creature is to be blessed by its Creator, and the very highest felicity of the child of God is to have his Father's blessing on his head and in his heart.

In a certain sense, dear friends, we cannot tell the time when God began to bless His people. If you go back to the day before all days, when there was no day but the Ancient of days, if you get back to the time when there was no time, when eternity alone existed, you find, in the council chambers of Divinity, that God was blessing His people. If I might suppose a day in eternity, I might say of it, "From this day will JEHOVAH bless His people."

When Jesus Christ appeared in human flesh, though you and I were not born, yet were we written in the book in which all the members of Christ are written, and from that day when He bowed His head, and said, "It is finished," and yielded up the ghost, a channel was opened for those mighty streams of grace which sprang from the divine decree, and it might be peculiarly said that from that day, God began to bless us.

When you and I were born, from the first moment that our face received the air, and our eyes were opened to the light, mercies were waiting for us. A tender mother received us on her bosom, a kind father provided for the needs of our weakness and infancy. I may say that from the cradle, the Lord has said, "From this day will I bless you."

But to some of us, there has been a second birthday, a day in which we passed from death unto life, from darkness into light. Happy day! We can never forget it. Next is it in happiness to that day in which we shall see the face of Christ without a veil between. The happiest day of our existence was that when we saw Christ hanging on the tree to bear the punishment of our sins. Truly may I say, as I stand at the foot of the cross, and remember the day when Jesus first met with me there, that He then said to me, "From this day will I bless you."

Passing, however, over all the times and seasons upon which we might well be tempted to linger, I shall use my text, first, *to seeking souls*. The time is come, even tonight, when God will bless them. Then I shall use it *to individual Christians*. May the same be their case! Then I shall apply it *to this church as a whole*. May this church realize the blessedness of the promise!

I. First, I shall use the text TO SEEKING SOULS.

I remember well, when my heart was seeking after God with intense earnestness, my never-ceasing desire and my daily cry was, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" And I would ask the Lord, "How long shall I cry unto Thee, and Thou will not hear me? How long shall I seek the face of Christ in vain?" This gives me sympathy with others in a like condition. You have been for a long time seeking rest and finding none. You are weary and heavy laden, and you are saying, tonight, "When will God bless me? When shall I be privileged to see my Father's face in Christ Jesus, and to know that my sins are forgiven?"

My beloved brethren and sisters, there is a period known to God, when He will show His face to His people. That period, when it does arrive, will certainly bring you comfort. It is written concerning Christ, "He must needs go through Samaria," and there is a similar necessity that, to every chosen sinner, a day of grace should come, that he may see Christ, and be saved through Him. That fixed and delightful time shall yet arrive to you. I pray that it may arrive tonight.

If you want to know when it is likely to arrive, let me give you some signs by which you may foresee it.

You are likely to have the whisper of God's love in your heart *when you have given up all confidence in the flesh*. It may be that you have some indistinct reliance, at the present moment, upon your own prayers. You are not so foolish as to trust in your baptism, or your confirmation, or your church going, or chapel going, but there lurks within you the traitorous thought that there is some efficacy, some usefulness in your Bible reading, in your tears and repentance, or something else that comes from you.

Now, remember, you will never know the fullness of Christ until you know the emptiness of everything else but Christ. All that was ever woven by man God shall unravel, all the sticks and stones that human energy can build, in the matter of eternal salvation, must be plucked down by JEHOVAH'S hand, for it is Christ alone who must build that house, unless He shall do so, they will labor in vain that build it. I say that this may be only an indistinct matter, but I pray you to cast out every particle of this old leaven, for Christ and your soul can never be agreed until you are willing to take Him to be your sole and only reliance, and if you have a shadow of a dependence anywhere else, Christ can never be a Savior to you. See to that matter.

The time to bless you is probably come *when there is a clean divorce between you and all your sins*. That it is which keeps so many poor sinners in trouble, because though they have given up many sins, there is one favorite sin which they still hold. But sinner, you cannot love Christ and your sins too. I know you are quite content to give up all the outward sins of the flesh, but there may be some worldliness, some covetousness, some little sin which you are loath to part with, but you must slay every one of these, in the purpose of your heart, or you can never be reconciled to your Father and your God.

One unrepented sin, one sin indulged in and delighted in, will as effectually stop the gates of heaven against your soul as if you should live in fornication, adultery, or murder. Your heart must hate all sin, and your heart must love all holiness. When this comes to pass, from that day God will bless you.

There are some who have never obtained peace through Christ, *because they have not sought it in earnest*. "I have prayed," you say, "in earnest. I have groaned, and cried, and wrestled." Yes, I know you have done so at times, but your earnestness has been of the spasmodic order. The gates of heaven open to all who are really believing in Christ, but they must know how to knock, and to knock again and again. When your soul has come to the point when you can say—

*"I can no denial take,
For I plead for Jesus' sake,"—*

then you shall have no denial. O soul, think of the hell from which you would escape! Will not that quicken your slumbering spirit? Then think of the heaven of which you would be a partaker. Will not this fire your sluggish soul? Come, I pray you, and meditate for a little while upon your state and

condition, upon time, eternity, death, heaven, hell, and let your soul begin to bestir herself. If you are cold, and love not prayer, God will not bless you, but when your soul comes to a devout enthusiasm, from that day will God bless you.

I think you are quite sure to get a blessing *when you are willing to have it in God's way*. Some of you do not intend to believe in Christ unless you feel very deep conviction. If God will condescend to alarm you with dreams, you will then go to Him. If you have made up your mind that you are to be saved in a certain stereotyped fashion, and you will never believe in Jesus unless He shall be pleased to manifest Himself in that particular way, the day of your blessing will tarry a long time before it comes, but when your soul says, "If I can but look to Jesus, I will not ask for this experience nor for that. Only save me, Lord, do but take me into the ark, and let me escape from the destruction that is coming upon all who are outside, and my soul will lay aside her whims, her wishes, and her proud will, and bless Your name for what Your Grace has done."

When your heart lies before God as the wax under the seal, ready to take any impression that the divine hand chooses to put upon it, then will God say, "From this day will I bless you."

To sum up everything in one—if there is a sinner here who says in his soul, "Truly, I will take Christ tonight, and rest upon Him, I see clearly that I have nowhere else to fly to, and I, therefore, fly to the cleft in the Rock of Ages, and find a shelter there," from this night God will bless you. If your faith is built on Christ, and Christ only, go your way, your sins, which are many, are forgiven you, and you are an accepted soul, and neither death nor hell shall ever divide you from your Father's love. Rejoice with joy unspeakable, for a long train of mercies shall be yours, world without end.

I think I have said enough on that point. Pray, you who understand the power of prayer, that God may bless these simple, feeble sentences to the comforting of some captives, and to the loosening of their bonds.

II. And now I shall turn TO GOD'S PEOPLE, and address a few words to them.

Present in this assembly, tonight, are many saints who know their blessedness in Christ Jesus, but they are pining after a higher state of spiritual life, they want more communion with Christ, a greater conformity to His image, and so on. Dear friends, you are wanting to know when you may expect this choice favor, when you may dare to walk in the light of your Father's face. Let me answer you. *When your spirit is entirely resigned to the divine will*, then, from that day God will bless you. It is very hard to bring down Lord Will-be-will to be a contented servant of the King of kings. It is an easy thing to stand up here, and sing—

*"If Thou should call me to resign
What most I prize—it ne'er was mine;
I only yield Thee what was Thine:
'Thy will be done!'"*

But it is not so easy to say that when you are looking into the face of a dead child, or have to follow to the grave some dearly-beloved wife or husband, or some brother or sister upon whom your soul was set. To stand to our surrenders then is hard work. We say, "Thy will be done," but when God's will is being done, we do not always use Job's language and say, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD!" When you see a Christian man in the furnace, you cannot expect that he will get out by asking, "When will this flame abate?" But the fire will soon be over when a man, in such circumstances, can say, "The Lord's will be done." It is a sign that the metal has been properly fused, and that the dross has gone, when you can see the image of the Refiner in it—when the heart reflects the face of God, and says, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Beloved, depend upon it, our miseries grow at the root of our selfishness. Where selfishness begins, sorrow begins, and where selfishness is dead, grief is dead. Do you comprehend me? If our souls had wholly given up everything to JEHOVAH'S will, we should never lose anything, for we would already

have given it up. We should never murmur if we could say, as the old Puritan said, "I always have my own will, because God has helped me to make His will my own will."

It proved the good state of the beggar's heart when someone said to him, "I wish you a good day," and he replied, "I thank you for your wish, but I always have good days. I do not know that one day is better than another when God is with me." "Well," said the one who was speaking to him, "surely there are some days that you like better than others." "No," he said, "there are not, all days please God, and what pleases God pleases me."

"If," said one, to an aged Christian woman, "you had your choice whether you would live or die, what would you choose?" She replied, "I would not choose at all." "But suppose you were forced to choose?" "I would then ask God to be good enough to choose for me." Still, you see, she would avoid the choice, and leave it to the Lord. When your heart becomes like that, then, from that day will God bless you.

As Christians, we may expect great blessing *when it is no longer a matter of talk with us that we will give our all for the service of God, but when we really do so*, then, from that day, God will bless us. I need not say, probably, that there is no giving so acceptable to God as that which is most costly to us. The widow's mite was precious not because it was a mite, but because it was all that she had. The old proverb says that "the liberal man gives until his hand sweats." There are not many of that sort.

True liberality begins when the hand begins to feel, when some sacrifice is caused by what we have given to the Lord our God. Do I feel, tonight, that all I am and all I have belongs to my Master? Can I say truly that if a life of pain and poverty would glorify Him, I would desire to live in pain and poverty, and if my death would more honor Him, I would be willing to leave health and comfort at once, and to bear the stroke of the sword of death? Do you feel that—

*"There's not a lamb among the flock
I would disdain to feed;
There's not a foe before whose face
I'd fear His cause to plead"?*

Can you make, over again tonight, that solemn declaration of allegiance to your God that you made when first you came to Christ—

*"'Tis done! The great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and He is mine:
He drew me, and I followed on.
Charm'd to confess the voice divine"?*

If so, then, from this day God will bless you.

There are some particular days on which God is pleased to grant a new lease of blessing to His people. Sometimes, it is *when they have been especially engaged in prayer*. I suppose you have all some landmark, if I may so call it, in your life, to which you can refer as being the starting point of your spiritual career, and also seasons of peculiar spiritual enjoyment. On such a day, for instance, one of you can say, "I had sweet communion with Christ, my soul was ravished with the glance of His eyes." Well, dating back from that, you feel that there was a period of peculiar enjoyment. Now, I hope that, tonight, at the communion table, we shall be favored with such a season, and equally so tomorrow in private prayer.

A certain Highlander began to entertain doubts as to his salvation. He could not, however, rest in doubt, but went to the top of a high mountain, and continued there all night wrestling in prayer, and was so taken up in devotion that he remained there the whole of the next day, but from that time forth, he was never vexed with doubts any more. His mighty struggle with Satan upon the top of the mountain seemed to end forever the period of his doubts and fears, and from that time a clear shining set in upon

him until he was taken home. It were well if we were to have some seasons set apart for seeking communion with Christ, for at such times He would bless us.

I believe, too, that *many Christians have dated new spiritual life from some particular act in their history*. I do not like to tell my own secrets, but there has been such a day with me from which I have had to date a sort of new life. Our friends know little of it, perhaps, but I recollect one Sabbath evening when, for some weeks, the collections in support of the College had not amounted to more than £2 or £3, and there were some twenty or thirty young men to maintain, and all that I had, had been spent, and there was no money that I knew of to pay for another week.

That evening I learned to walk by faith in God in temporal things, a lesson that I had not so fully learned before. That very night, I went out from here, and said to one of my brethren who is sitting behind me, "Now my bank is exhausted." "No," he said, "your Banker is the eternal God, and He can never be exhausted." "Well, at any rate," I said, "I have nothing in hand." "Still," he said, "cannot you trust your God?" We opened a letter that was then lying on the table, totally unknown to him or to me either, and found in it £200 sent by some donor whose name I never heard, and probably never shall hear until the day of judgment.

From that moment to this I have trusted God in that matter, and mark my words, though I have found funds to be wanting for this or that, there has never been any real want of money, for, whenever it is needed God sends it. I have considered that, from that very night, my heavenly Father took that work into His own hands, and He said, "From this time will I bless you."

Some of you may have had a comfortable income, and you got on very well, but it was all taken from you, and you seemed to be cast adrift, but then, for the first time, you began to live by faith, and though, as men call it, it is only a hand-to-mouth way of living, yet you have had greater blessedness in it than you ever had before, and though you may not be as rich as before, yet you have had such inward comfort, and such peace of conscience, that you have felt that God from that day has blessed you.

If there are any Christians here who are dallying midway between faith and sense, I conjure you to snap the chain. Worldly people will say to you, "Let well enough alone," and so on, but the best prudence in the world is to be a child, and the highest wisdom is that which the world thinks folly. "He who runs straightforward makes the best runner," was the saying of a German when he was resting upon his God in one of his works of piety, and very true is it. Do not go roundabout, here and there, and ask, "Is this or that true?" but go straight to your God in the simple path of duty, in the holy way of faith. Take that course, and "from this day," saith the Lord, "will I bless you."

III. And now, to close. I think there is a time when EVERY CHURCH may hear the voice of God saying, "From this day will I bless you."

I believe it will hear that voice as soon as ever it is bent upon getting a blessing. It is a difficult thing, however, to get a church into that state. I know some country churches where the minister's efforts are almost certain to be fruitless, not so much because of the congregation as because of the church. My brethren in the ministry sometimes say to me, "I tried to get a prayer meeting, but they would not come. I wanted to have some special meetings, but an old deacon said, 'We never had such a thing, and we ain't going to have any now.' I wanted to get them to do something by way of evangelizing the neighborhood, but they said they could not afford it, they had as much as they could do to keep up their own cause, and they would not do it."

Now, such churches never can expect a blessing, but I believe that in this church we have only one mind, and that one mind is this—we mean to plead before God until He opens the windows of heaven, and pours us out a blessing. We feel, every one of us, upon this subject, that we will wrestle with the covenant angel until He gives us our heart's desire, and we feel, too, that Christ will never be satisfied till many more jewels are put into His sparkling crown. Well, I believe that if this is true, from this very night God will bless us.

God is sure to bless His people *when every one feels that he has something to do and means to do it*. Do not say, "My brother ought to do so-and-so, and my minister ought to do this and that." Of course,

you can speak like that if you wish to do so, but that is not the way to get a blessing. The main business of each Christian should lie in his own personal responsibility. I have heard of a man who, as he went by the plate one collection Sunday, said, when he was asked what he gave, "What I give is nothing to anybody." Somebody said he thought that was exactly what he did give.

Now there are some people who, in what they do, come up to the same standard, they do no good to anybody. They live for themselves, and when they die, their existence will have been purely a selfish one. Such people bring a curse, rather than a blessing, to the church, but if you feel, brothers and sisters, tonight, that each one of you has a niche to fill, and resolve that you will try to fill it, if you realize that there is something to be done, and in God's name you mean each of you to do it, then, from this time God will bless you.

And there is sure to be a blessing *when there is a strong current of prayer*, and there is that current in this church right now. There will be that current, I hope, tomorrow evening when we meet together especially for prayer. I hope that every one may come up with a heart like a censor full of sweet incense, smoking with holy prayer.

Brethren and sisters, we must pray more in private. Here, perhaps, we fail. We must be instant in season and out of season in prayer, if prayer can ever be out of season. And then, when we come together at our prayer meetings, there must be wrestling times—times in which the blessing must surely be won from God by holy wrestling. When love and concord reign, when each member assists each other member, when the whole united church seeks nothing but the glory of God in the conversion of souls, *then will the blessing come*.

I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I do venture to foretell a great blessing upon this church in the year which has so happily commenced. We ended the last year by wrapping it up in a shroud of prayer, we will give this year the wings of praise, but we will still continue to pray for a visitation of the Spirit, and we shall surely have it, and the Lord's name shall be glorified.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

HAGGAI 1 AND 2

Haggai Chapter 1. Verses 1-2. *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.*

God keeps an almanac, and the date on which He speaks is always important. There is a set time for each of His messages to come to men, and God would have them give heed to every message as soon as it is delivered to them. If they do not, He keeps count of the days of their delay, and therefore He is particular in causing His servants to record the exact date when His message was delivered, "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest." Oh, that God would make this very day notable in our history by speaking to the hearts of many here!

Notice, too, that God also takes care to direct His messages to those for whom they are intended. The word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel and to Joshua. God knows to whom His message is especially addressed today, and He will not let it miss its mark. Oh, that someone here would cry unto Him, and say, "Lord, speak to me as You did to Zerubbabel, and not to me only, but to such and such another, as You did to Joshua."

"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say." So that the Lord notes what people say, and in due time He reminds them of what they have said. Sometimes, He makes men eat their own

words, but if not, He at least recalls them to their remembrance, "This people say, The time is not come, the time that JEHOVAH'S house should be built." Delay has always been one of the strongest of Satan's temptations even with God's own people, who far too often say, even concerning His work which they know ought to be done, "The time is not come."

How much more would be done for God if we would all do at once what ought to be done! We could then go on to something else, and make our lives still more useful and fruitful. But we delay the carrying out of one good purpose so long that there remains no opportunity for another. If any of you Christian people are tempted to put off some service for God which lies upon your heart, I pray you to remember your Lord's words, and to imitate His prompt action, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

3-4. *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?*

"There seems to be time enough for you to enjoy the luxuries of life, but not time for you to rebuild the temple of the Lord—time enough for you to get rich, but not time for you to serve God—time enough for you to spend your labor upon anything for yourself, but not upon the house of your God!" What a rebuke was this to those who professed to be the Lord's people!

5. *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

"Just look back a little, and see what has already been the consequences of looking to yourselves, and not to your God, have you gained anything by so acting?"

6. *Ye have sown much, and bring in little;*

"You have sown much to yourselves, but little to God, what has your sowing brought in to you?"

6. *Ye eat, but ye have not enough;*

"Those of you who do seem to prosper are not content with what you have. Peace of mind does not come with it, you are not happy."

6. *Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink.*

"You are as thirsty as ever after all your drinking from the earthly cistern, yet you still crave for more of that drink which can never quench your soul's thirst."

6. *Ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

How often does this happen! Yet what folly it is for a man to work hard, and earn wages, and then put the money into a bag with holes, and so lose it all!

7-9. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.*

Again I beg you to note what a stern rebuke this was, yet how richly was it deserved! God had done great things for His people, He had brought them back from Babylon to Jerusalem, and their first concern should have been to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed. But every man was more concerned for his own house than for the house of the Lord, and therefore, no good could come of whatever they did, or whatever they had. "I did blow upon it," said the Lord, and when God blows upon whatever a man has, or upon whatever a man does, He soon blows it away, as the marginal reading says.

10-11. *Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.*

We are dependent upon God for everything, and sometimes He makes use of the ordinary laws of nature to be a chastisement to those who forget Him. If we will not be reminded of Him by His mercies, we shall be reminded by His judgments, and if, as stewards, we do not make a proper use of that which He entrusts to us, He can easily take it all away.

12. *Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the word of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.*

What a blessing it is when faithful testimony is thus received! Sometimes it happens that people get angry, and hate the preacher who too plainly rebukes them for their sins, but when the Spirit of God works within them, they take heed to what is said, and receive the preacher's message as from God Himself.

13. *Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.*

Haggai was the Lord's messenger, so he did not utter his own words, but he "spake in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith JEHOVAH." He was with them, so they were with Him, and it is the same with us if we are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, for He says to us, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and if we have the presence of God, we have all that we need.

14-15. *And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.*

God takes note of the time when His people work for Him, He records, in His almanac, the day, the month, the year, for He loves to see His people actively engaged in His service.

Haggai Chapter 2. Verse 1. *In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,—*

God's people need to be spoken to very often, and every time God speaks to them, He takes account of it. Let us do the same, let us not think it is such an unimportant matter for us to hear a Gospel sermon that we need not take note when we hear it. Oh, that the Word of the Lord were more precious to us in these days, let us praise God for it, and not reckon it to be so common a thing that we take no more notice of it than we do of eating our breakfast or sitting down to our supper.

2-3. *Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?*

There could not have been many persons left who had seen Solomon's temple. If any such were still living at that time, they must have been extremely aged persons, yet there were many there whose fathers had seen it, and who had heard from their fathers, when they sat upon their knees as children, what a glorious place the house of God had been in Solomon's day.

4. *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:*

This is the second time that Haggai was sent with this message. It was so rich, so full, so divinely encouraging, that the Lord might well repeat it, "I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts."

5-7. *According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*

So it happened that to the second temple, the Babe of Bethlehem was brought, that glorious "Desire of all nations" whom we worship, and thus it came to pass that the glory of the second house was, after all, far greater than the glory of the first.

8. *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The released captives had not much of it with which to build the second temple, but God had all that was needed, and He was willing to supply them with enough for all the needs of the great work which they had undertaken in His name.

9. *The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The Prince of Peace gave peace to many in that second temple.

10. *In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,—*

Here is another message from the Lord, and the date of its delivery is as carefully noted as the dates of those that had preceded it.

11-14. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.* [See sermon #2495, Defiled and Defiling].

That which is ceremonially holy cannot communicate its holiness to that which is unclean, but that which is unclean, in the eyes of the law, can communicate its uncleanness to anything that touches it. These people, being themselves defiled with sin, could not bring to God either acceptable service or acceptable offerings.

15-17. *And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.*

How often, in these two chapters, the word “Consider” occurs! And this subject of the Lord’s chastisement was well worthy of His people’s earnest and solemn consideration, yet they were not brought to repentance by all that they suffered.

18-19. *Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD’S temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.*

That was indeed a memorable day in their history, I trust that many of us can also remember such a notable day in our life, when the Lord said to us, “From this day will I bless you.”

20-23. *And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and I will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.*

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